



# **GAUTENG PROVINCE**

EDUCATION  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

**To: All Media  
Att: News Editors  
For immediate release**

**9 November 2023**

### **MEC CHILOANE CONCERNED ABOUT LEARNER ILL-DISCIPLINE AND MALADMINISTRATION AT HOPE LSEN SCHOOL**

The Gauteng Department Education (GDE) has launched an investigation at Hope Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN) in Westcliff, Johannesburg, following a series of concerning incidents regarding learner ill-discipline and maladministration.

We are regrettably aware of two alleged rape incidents that occurred at the school. The most recent incident took place on Thursday, 26 October 2023, where a Grade 12 boy learner allegedly raped a Grade 4 boy learner at school boarding facility. A previous incident took place on 14 February 2023, where a Grade 9 boy learner allegedly raped a Grade 8 girl learner.

It must be noted that cases of sexual assault were opened with the police for both these incidents, and the perpetrators were suspended accordingly. As a precautionary measure, the alleged Grade 12 perpetrator has been temporarily accommodated at a different school in order to write his final examinations. Our officials have been in constant communication with the parents of all affected learners, providing necessary support.

Sadly, another incident took place on 14 September 2023, where a learner was hospitalised after fellow learners unlocked his electric wheelchair, causing him to lose control and sustain severe injuries. The incident is alleged to have taken place after school when the learners were reportedly playing around on the school premises. The learner in question has unfortunately not returned to school, and is recuperating at home, while the other learners were taken through necessary disciplinary processes.

Another concerning incident involves a learner allegedly bringing space cookies to school and sharing them with his fellow learners. Educators reported this incident after noticing learners displaying strange

behaviour. Subsequently, about 8 learners tested positive for drug usage, and the perpetrator was suspended.

Accordingly, the previous principal of the school was charged for different allegations, however, she was exonerated by the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC). The Department is working tirelessly to come to an amicable solution concerning the principal's return and ensuring the school operates effectively.

In light of all these events, it is paramount to launch an investigation that will probe the circumstances of these incidents and hold possible individuals accountable. This action by the Department will be concurrent with police investigations into sensitive matters occurring at the school. We are hopeful the police will handle these cases with the sensitivity they deserve. We urge staff, learners and parents to report such incidents to the department via our relevant districts so that they are investigated accordingly.

"We strongly condemn all acts of misconduct, which seek to undermine the dignity of our learning institutions. Therefore, we are hopeful that this investigation will assist to uproot instances of ill-discipline and maladministration. Schools are urged to enforce their codes of conduct to deal with disciplinary matters, and learner ill-discipline will not be tolerated in our schools. The Department relentlessly appeals to parents and school staff to work together in an effort to educate our learners within a conducive environment at all times. In some instances, learner ill-discipline is easily necessitated by what is happening in the learner's environment. As such, if teachers don't respect each other, this might enable learners to misbehave," MEC Chiloane.

**For more information, contact the Gauteng Department of Education's Spokesperson, Steve Mabona on 072 574 3860 or Spokesperson for Gauteng Education MEC Matome Chiloane, Xolani Mkhwemte on 084 513 9285**

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